

NEWS RELEASE

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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For Immediate Release

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Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, today announced the indictment of two defendants for conspiracy to manufacture and possess with intent to distribute over 500 grams of methamphetamine in Franklin and Williamson Counties. The grand jury for the Southern District of Illinois returned the indictment in United States District Court at Benton, Illinois on June 8, 2006.

ROBERT A. WEIR, Jr., age 26, of West Frankfort, Illinois, and **VANCE LEE BEERS, JR.**, of Pittsburg, Illinois, were charged in a one count indictment which alleges their involvement in a conspiracy to manufacture and possess with intent to distribute over 500 grams of a mixture and substance containing methamphetamine between November 2000 and March 31, 2006. Upon conviction, each faces a maximum potential sentence of life imprisonment, a \$4 million dollar fine and at least 5 years of supervised release.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

Investigation into the case is being handled by the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, the County and Municipal Interdiction Team (COMIT), which is a drug investigation task force, and by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael C. Carr.